



Child Passenger Safety Tips

According to statistics, **9 out of 10 car seats are NOT used correctly**. It has been found that a properly installed car seat reduces a child's risk of death or serious injury by up to 70%. The Center recommends that expectant parents have their seat checked before the baby is born. Remember when you take a car ride to a friend or any relatives, make sure you follow the below guidelines based on your child's age.

Child Passenger Safety Tips From KidsPlates.Org*

0-6 Months Old

In a car, the safest place for your baby is in a car seat, in the backseat away from airbags — besides, it's the law. Children must ride in a car seat or booster seat until they are at least six years old or 60 pounds.

- Buckle your baby correctly into a rear-facing car seat — for every ride, every time.
- Make sure the car seat is the right size for your child — your child's car seat can face forward **ONLY** after he is at least one year old **AND** over 20 pounds.
- Never hold a baby in your lap while driving or riding in a car — in an accident, your body could crush the baby or he could be thrown from the car.
- Never leave a baby alone in a car — never.
- Don't use a handheld phone while driving — it's not only against the law, but creates an unsafe distraction (law effective July 1, 2008).

7-12 Months Old

In a car, the safest place for your baby is in a car seat, in the backseat away from airbags — besides, it's the law. Children must ride in a car seat or booster seat until they are at least six years old or 60 pounds.

- Buckle your baby correctly into a rear-facing car seat — for every ride, every time.
- Make sure the car seat is the right size for your child — your child's car seat can face forward **ONLY** after he is at least one year old **AND** over 20 pounds.
- Never hold a baby in your lap while driving or riding in a car — in an accident, your body could crush the baby or he could be thrown from the car.
- Never leave a baby alone in a car — never.
- Don't use a handheld phone while driving — it's not only against the law, but creates an unsafe distraction (law effective July 1, 2008).

1-3 Years Old

In a car, the safest place for your child is in a car seat — besides, it's the law. Children must ride in a car seat or booster seat until they are at least six years old or 60 pounds.

- Buckle your child correctly into a car seat, in the backseat away from airbags — for every ride, every time.
- Make sure the car seat is the right size for your child — your child's car seat can face forward **ONLY** after he is at least one year old **AND** over 20 pounds.
- Never hold a child in your lap while driving or riding in a car — in an accident, your body could crush the child or he could be thrown from the car.
- Never leave a child alone in a car — never.
- Don't use a handheld phone while driving — it's not only against the law, but creates an unsafe distraction (law effective July 1, 2008).

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4-5 Years Old

In a car, the safest place for your child is in a car seat. By law, children must ride in a car seat or booster seat until they are at least six years old or 60 pounds.

- Buckle your child correctly into a car seat or booster seat, in the backseat away from airbags — for every ride, every time.
- Make sure the car seat is the right size for your child. For those in a booster seat, the shoulder belt should lay across the child's shoulder (not the neck or throat) and the lap belt should be worn low and flat across the hips (not the belly).
- Never leave a child alone in a car — never.
- Don't use a handheld phone while driving — it's not only against the law, but creates an unsafe distraction (law effective July 1, 2008).

6-8 Years Old

In a car, the safest place for your child is in a booster seat or restrained by a seat belt. By law, children must ride in a car seat or booster seat until they are at least six years old OR 60 pounds.

- Make sure everyone in the car (including you) is buckled up safely before starting the car and that no one has placed the shoulder belt behind his body or under his arm.
- The shoulder belt should lay across the shoulder (not the neck or throat) and the lap belt should be low and flat across the hips (not the belly).
- It is safest for children under the age of 12 to ride in the backseat of the car.
- Never leave a child alone in a car — never.
- Don't use a handheld phone while driving — it's not only against the law, but creates an unsafe distraction (law effective July 1, 2008).

9-12 Years Old

A seat belt can help keep your child from being hurt or killed in a car crash. By law, the driver and all passengers must be correctly buckled when in a car.

- Make sure everyone in the car (including you) is buckled up safely before starting the car and that no one has placed the shoulder belt behind his body or under his arm.
- The shoulder belt should lay across the shoulder (not the neck or throat) and the lap belt should be low and flat across the hips (not the belly).
- It is safest for children under the age of 12 to ride in the backseat of the car.
- Don't use a handheld phone while driving — it's not only against the law, but creates an unsafe distraction (law effective July 1, 2008).

13-18 Years Old

Car crashes are the second biggest killer of teens. Seat belt use can help prevent serious injury or even death in a crash. By law, everyone in the car must wear a seat belt.

- Make sure your teen — and everyone in the car (including you) — always wear a seat belt, even when riding in a friend's car.
- Teach your teen good driving skills and make sure all of the rules are followed to help get your teen his driver's license.
- Reinforce with your teen that he is never to drink and drive, or to get into a car with someone who has been drinking or using drugs.
- Remind your teen not to use a wireless phone OR hands-free device while driving — it's against the law for anyone under the age of 18 to use EITHER while operating a motor vehicle (law effective July 1, 2008).

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Car Seat Installation Assistance

- Mercy Hospitals and Safe Kids offer FREE car seat safety checks. Services are offered in English, Spanish, Russian and Hmong. Low cost seats are available for qualified families.
- Fitting Locations:
Methodist Hospital, 7500 Hospital Dr., Sacramento
Mercy San Juan Medical Center, 6501 Coyle Ave., Carmichael
Call for appointment:
English (916) 864-5779
Spanish (916) 904-3799
Russian (916) 864-5566
Hmong (916) 864-5541

*For more information on buying a Kids Plate as a gift to benefit local child safety programs, please visit kidsplates.org